

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY S/PRS:JTRATTNER
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FOR HODDING CARTER FROM S/PRS- TRATTNER - NO. 5

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP, SOPN (VANCE, CYRUS R.)

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING AUGUST 22, 1977

1. OVER WEEKEND WE ACKNOWLEDGED WE HAD INQUIRED OF SOUTH AFRICANS ABOUT REPORTS THEY ARE PREPARING TEST NUCLEAR DEVICE. QUESTION AROSE IN BRIEFING AS WHAT ANSWERS SOUTH AFRICANS GAVE US, TO WHICH I RESPONDED I DID NOT HAVE ANYTHING ON IT; PRESSED FURTHER AS TO WHETHER ANY RESPONSE HAD IN FACT BEEN RECEIVED, I SAID I WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO OFFER ANYTHING ON THE SUBJECT TODAY.

2. WITH ANSWER FINALLY IN HAND, I WAS ABLE TO RESPOND TO QUESTION TAKEN LAST WEEK ON SUBJECT OF ISRAELI USE OF US-SUPPLIED WEAPONS IN SUPPORT OF CHRISTIANS IN LEBANON. I SAID ISRAELIS HAD INFORMED US, BUT DID NOT CONSULT US, ABOUT THEIR USE OF US-SUPPLIED EQUIPMENT, AND THAT WE HAVE CONCLUDED THAT SUCH USE OF US EQUIPMENT BY ISRAEL DOES NOT

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VIOLATE ANY U.S. LAW, OR ANY AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL. I TOOK SUCH QUESTIONS AS WHEN ISRAELIS INFORMED US OF THEIR USE OF U.S. EQUIPMENT, WHAT KINDS OF EQUIPMENT WERE USED AND HOW, WHETHER SUCH USE IS CONTINUING. TO ALL OF THESE I LATER POSTED ANSWER THAT WE NOT PREPARED GO INTO DETAILS OF DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES ON THIS SUBJECT.

3. RELATED QUESTION, ON REPORTED ISRAELI TRANSFER TO CHRISTIANS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON OF U.S.-ORIGIN EQUIPMENT, ALSO WAS RAISED. I SAID THAT, BY AGREEMENT, ISRAEL CANNOT TRANSFER ANY MILITARY EQUIPMENT DIRECTLY PURCHASED FROM U.S. WITHOUT PERMISSION OF U.S. GOVERNMENT; AND THAT ISRAEL HAS ASSURED US IT HAS NOT TRANSFERRED TO ANY PARTY IN LEBANESE CONFLICT ANY U.S.-ORIGIN EQUIPMENT WHICH WOULD FALL UNDER SUCH AN AGREEMENT.

4. QUESTION WAS TAKEN WHETHER WE AWARE OF REPORTS THAT M-16 RIFLES OF U.S. MANUFACTURE HAD BEEN CAPTURED BY PALESTINIANS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON, AND THAT BURNED-OUT TANKS OF U.S. DESIGN HAD BEEN EITHER SEEN OR SEIZED IN SAME REGION. ANSWER POSTED LATER SAID WE ARE NOT AWARE CHRISTIAN MILITIA HAS ACQUIRED ANY U.S.-MANUFACTURED EQUIPMENT SINCE FIGHTING BROKE OUT ON MAJOR SCALE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON LAST YEAR; IT IS PROBABLE, HOWEVER, THAT MILITIA GROUPS ACQUIRED U.S.-MADE WEAPONRY FROM STOCKS IN LEBANON DURING PREVIOUS CIVIL STRIFE.

5. IN RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR COMMENT ON EVANS-NOVAK

PIECE IN MONDAY WASHPOST (SENT YOU SEPTTEL), I SAID IT IS SPECULATIVE STORY ON WHICH I HAD NOTHING TO OFFER.

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 23-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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